

CONGRESSMAN JOE COURTNEY 2019 END OF YEAR REPORT

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2019 BY THE NUMBERS



**\$1.8 MILLION RECOVERED FOR
CONSTITUENTS**



**600 CONSTITUENT CASES
PROCESSED**



**NEARLY 25,000 PEOPLE JOINED
OUR QUARTERLY TELE-TOWN HALLS**



**RESPONDED TO NEARLY 79,000
CALLS, EMAILS & LETTERS**



**350+ MEETINGS, VISITS, TOWN
HALLS & OFFICE HOURS ACROSS
EASTERN CT**

STAY IN TOUCH

**SIGN UP FOR CONGRESSMAN COURTNEY'S
WEEKLY ENEWSLETTER:
[COURTNEY.HOUSE.GOV/CONTACT/NEWSLETTER](https://courtney.house.gov/contact/newsletter)**

FIGHTING FOR EASTERN CT

A HISTORIC INVESTMENT IN OUR REGION

In his first year as Chairman of the House Seapower Subcommittee, Congressman Courtney has worked hard to secure the funding and support needed for the exciting developments this year in our region's submarine manufacturing sector and our economy, such as:

- A new \$22 billion contract between the Navy and Electric Boat for the construction of at least nine, and up to 12, new advanced submarines – the largest contract in the Navy's history
- A massive new expansion of the Groton shipyard to support work on the Columbia-class submarine, which will begin construction next year
- A new \$72 million pier at SUBASE New London, ensuring that the base will continue to support our newest submarines for years to come

DEFENDING THOSE WHO SERVE & HAVE SERVED

This year, Congressman Courtney has worked hard to ensure that our military and veterans have the support and care they deserve by:

- Passing a new law to ensure that Navy veterans who served on ships around Vietnam and were exposed to Agent Orange can finally access the care and services they need
- Blocking a Defense Department plan to trim back elements of the Post-9/11 GI Bill for long-serving servicemembers and their families
- Finally repealing the "Widow's Tax," which has reduced survivor benefits for military families for over 20 years

WORKING TO ADDRESS THE CRUMBLING FOUNDATIONS CRISIS

Congressman Courtney has continued to work this year to ensure that our region gets the support it needs to address the crumbling foundations crisis by:

- Passing an amendment to allocate federal funding towards research that will help develop new solutions for repairing homes
- Successfully urging state officials to allocate federal housing funding towards testing programs in Ellington, Stafford and Vernon
- Working with the Government Accountability Office to kick off their wide-ranging review of the issue, initiated based on legislation Courtney passed.



REDUCING THE COST OF HEALTHCARE

Congressman Courtney has continued his efforts to address one of the top concerns facing eastern Connecticut families – access to affordable health care – by:

- Championing a historic new bill (H.R. 3) to reduce drug prices for millions of Americans by allowing the federal government to negotiate prices and re-invest savings into innovative research and expanding vision, hearing, and dental benefits in Medicare
- Assembling a bipartisan coalition in the House to pass his legislation through Congress to repeal the misguided “Cadillac Tax” on health care plans
- Passing legislation to crack down on junk health insurance plans that do not have to cover pre-existing conditions or provide essential health benefits

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

PRESERVE PLUM ISLAND

Congress passed his legislation to prevent Plum Island from being sold off to the highest bidder and to block the federal government from marketing the island for sale.

PROTECT HEALTH CARE WORKERS

With bipartisan support, the House passed his bill, H.R. 1309, to stem increasing rates of violence against front line health care workers by enacting strong federal standards and training requirements.

MOVE FORWARD ON HEMP IN CONNECTICUT

After helping to pass the federal 2018 Farm Bill, he worked with state officials to get Connecticut's new hemp production program up and running this year.

PROTECT THE WOOD-PAWCATUCK WATERSHED

Congress passed a new law to extend federal "wild and scenic" protections for the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed, and approved his push to provide new funding.

SECURE PAID LEAVE FOR FEDERAL WORKER

The new defense bill passed in Congress includes 12 weeks of paid family leave for the 8,000 people in Connecticut that work for federal agencies.

STEM THE TIDE OF ILLEGAL ROBOCALLS

With the number of unwanted and illegal "robocalls" growing each year, the House passed a bipartisan bill to crack down on bad actors and enhance penalties for those who break the law.

CASEWORK HIGHLIGHTS

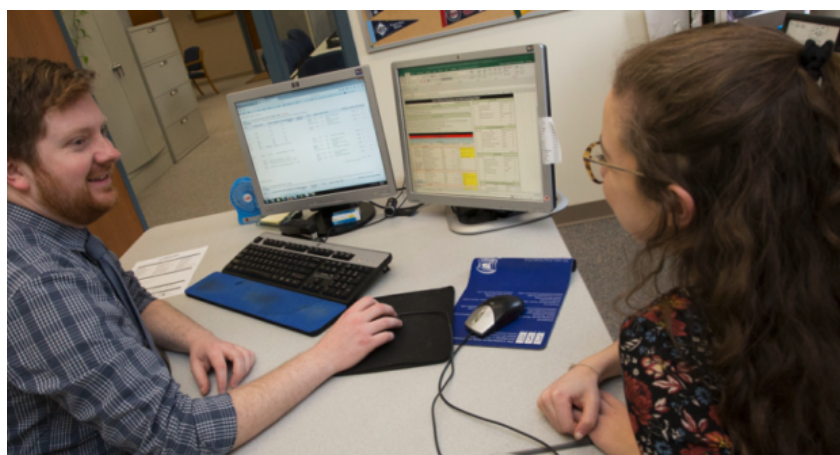
Every year, Rep. Courtney's office assists thousands of residents in obtaining benefits and services from the federal government. This year alone, they saved constituents nearly 1.8 million dollars. Here are some of the casework success stories that Rep. Courtney's office has had in 2019 in helping constituents solve their issues.

SMALL BUSINESS

Pelletier Builders, Inc. of Coventry contacted Rep. Courtney's office this year to seek assistance with a case of mistaken identity. A major credit reporting company had erroneously mixed up PB INC.'s credit report with that of another company that had gone bankrupt earlier in the year. PB inc, a stable and solvent company, needed this error rectified immediately. Courtney's office jumped on the case and reached out to the credit report company to address the problem. 10 days later, PB Inc's credit profile was corrected.



CASEWORK HIGHLIGHTS



HIGHER EDUCATION

Chris Drewry, an Assistant Dean in the School of Education and Professional Studies at Eastern Connecticut State University, contacted Rep. Courtney's office seeking help with the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program which many local, state, and federal employees utilize to pay back student debt. PSLF requires 120 monthly payments for a public service employee to receive federal student loan forgiveness. He submitted his initial Employment Certification Form in 2017, and two years passed without him receiving any confirmation of his total payment count amount. Without knowing his payment count, it was difficult to plan for his family's future. Chris reached out to Rep. Courtney's office and sought assistance with verifying his status in the program. Courtney's team sent an inquiry to FedLoan Servicing to receive his total payment count., and received welcome news that Chris had 24 qualifying payments – the accurate total amount for two years.

CASEWORK HIGHLIGHTS

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Larry Luther of Norwich, a retired US Navy veteran, contacted Rep. Courtney's office this year for assistance after being erroneously charged \$6,600 from the Veterans Affairs Agency due to incomplete spouse verification information, which failed to show that Mr. Luther was still married. This resulted in his spouse being removed from his record, and added a \$6600 charge to his account.

Mr. Luther was in fact still married and was traveling the world as an active missionary, which prompted the non-delivery of VA paperwork and the ensuing debt. Upon his notice, our veteran's caseworker stepped in and reached out to the VA, which was able to verify Mr. Luther's marriage status, negate the \$6600 debt, and return \$1200 of withheld funds from his retirement.



CASEWORK HIGHLIGHTS

IMMIGRATION

Idelma, a local small business owner in Norwich, contacted my office 10 years ago seeking assistance with her immigration status. She had failed to receive a crucial letter from the immigration service which could have hindered her track to becoming a citizen. We stepped in and rectified the receipt of the correspondence and helped her continue her pursuit of naturalization.

Years later, Idelma was on the cusp of becoming a US citizen, and reached out for assistance to successfully apply for her citizenship test. Idelma had run into a mailing error in attaining an oath ceremony date for her citizenship. Rep. Courtney's office was able to work with the Hartford field office to get her a formal ceremony date. After successfully passing her test and participating in the ceremony, Idelma officially became a US citizen.

Rep. Courtney's last correspondence with Idelma was this year: she's still running a successful small business, and Courtney's office is helping her in the immigrant visa process so that she can be reunited with her adult children.



CASEWORK HIGHLIGHTS



WORKERS-COMP, SOCIAL SECURITY & MEDICARE

Jennifer, a constituent from Norwich, was collecting Social Security Disability (SSD) and Medicare after she was injured on the job at a local company. She decided to file for worker's compensation for her injury and began receiving medical treatment. As her case progressed, a paperwork mishap occurred between her employer's insurance and Medicare, and Jennifer's medical expenses were erroneously reported as unpaid to Medicare – her employer's insurance had in fact paid Medicare for Jennifer's health costs. Medicare couldn't find documentation of this on its end, and charged Jennifer for her health costs.

To add to the dilemma, Medicare began garnishing her SSD benefits and tax return. Jennifer contacted Courtney's office and showed proof that her employer paid Medicare and that she needed help getting her money back. Courtney's office immediately contacted Medicare and sent them documented proof that Jennifer's company insurance had paid her bills. After a few phone calls, Jennifer received a reimbursement for her garnished funds.

GRANTS HIGHLIGHTS

In 2019, Congressman Courtney helped secure over \$177 million in federal resources to eastern Connecticut, supporting a diversity of programs and initiatives throughout the district. Among these federal grant awards was funding for telemedicine initiatives to help connect residents in rural areas with access to their healthcare providers, funding for drug free communities that have a real, measurable impact in high vulnerability populations, new resources for our region's first responders, and more.

\$319,000 IN FEDERAL FUNDING FOR RURAL TELEHEALTH INITIATIVE IN WINDHAM & TOLLAND COUNTIES

In October, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of Rural Development awarded United Services, Inc \$319,194 through the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program to help expand the capacity of United Services' telecommunications connectivity. These new resources will help increase rural patient access to behavioral health services and giving patients access to therapists, doctors, and other health professionals despite being separated by long distances.

\$625,000 IN FEDERAL FUNDING FOR NORWICH DRUG-FREE COMMUNITIES

In October, the Norwich Prevention Council (NPC) received a Drug-Free Communities Grant (DFC) of \$125,000 a year over the course of 5 years through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). Over the next 5 years, these resources will help support efforts to reduce youth substance abuse rates in Norwich and surrounding communities, as well as the implementation of research-based and effective prevention strategies. NPC was one the few organizations nationwide to receive this grant award.

GRANTS HIGHLIGHTS

\$625,000 in Federal Funding for Andover, Hebron & Marlborough Drug-Free Communities

In October, AHM Youth & Family Services which serves the towns of Andover, Hebron and Marlborough, received a Drug-Free Communities Grant of \$125,000 a year over the course of 5 years through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). This highly competitive grant award will provide much-needed resources to AHM's efforts to combat local underage drinking and drug abuse.

Federal Funding Award For Sprague's Baltic Fire Engine Company

In September, the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) awarded a federal grant of more than \$170,000 to the Town of Sprague on behalf of the Baltic Fire Engine Company. The new federal funding will support the critical procurement of 24 new firefighter breathing apparatuses for the men and women of the Baltic Fire Engine Company.

Courtney Announces Host Of Federal Funding Bound For State Parks And Conservation Areas Throughout Eastern Connecticut

In October, three federal grants totaling over \$560,000 were awarded to the State of Connecticut's Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) by the U.S. Department of the Interior's Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The funds will support future land acquisition at three sites in eastern Connecticut: the Mono Pond State Park Reserve in Columbia; the Quinebaug River Wildlife Management Area, which spans across Canterbury and Plainfield; and Devil's Hopyard State Park in East Haddam.

GRANTS HIGHLIGHTS

More Than \$2 Million in Federal Funding for Connecticut Sea Grant Program

In September, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) awarded federal grants totaling more than \$2 million to Connecticut sea Grant (CTSG) based out of the University of Connecticut's Avery Point campus in Groton. The first award for \$1,085,131 will help support the establishment of a National Sea Grant Seaweed Hub, which will grant federal and state agencies the ability to access information to guide their own planning and outreach efforts, as well as provide seaweed aquaculture stakeholders with the information they need to make better informed decisions. The second award of \$1,173,284 will be used to expand available science-based tools and information to proactively and effectively engage the public, press, and decision-makers about the social, economic and environmental effects of shellfish aquaculture. The funding will also be used to expand entry level training opportunities to improve decision-making of permitting, benefitting bivalve aquaculture development in Connecticut and New England.

Over \$27,000 to Support Police Officers in Plainfield

In July, Rep. Courtney announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Rural Development awarded the Town of Plainfield a federal grant of \$27,300 to support infrastructure improvements at the Plainfield Police Department. The federal investment assisted the Town of Plainfield in replacing interior and exterior doors at the Plainfield Police Department, and to install new electronic access control systems throughout the facility.

Over \$72,000 in Federal Funding for Putnam and Willimantic Police Departments

In August, Rep. Courtney announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Rural Development awarded two federal grants totaling over \$72,000 to the Putnam Police Department and the Willimantic Police Department to help purchase much-needed new police cruisers for the departments.